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ORIGIN EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ABF-01 SY-05 L-03 A-01 SCA-01 SSO-00

SS-15 /039 R

DRAFTED BY EUR/SE:BSCARLIS:DLD

APPROVED BY EUR/SE:WLEAGLETON

SCA - AGUISE

EUR - LBLAINGEN

A/BF/OAG - RADEITCHMAN

EUR/EX - JSULLIVAN

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TO AMEMBASSY ATHENS IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CASC, CRPS, CGENAPER

SUBJECT: - GAO DRAFT REPORT ON ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION OF
AMERICANS OVERSEAS DURING CYPRUS CRISIS OF 1974

REF: SCARLIS/DAVIS TELECON AUG 11

FOR: GEANEAS AND DAVIS

1. WE ARE TRANSMITTING TO EMBASSY ATHENS FOR THEIR COMMENT THE RELEVANT SECTIONS OF A GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE DRAFT REPORT ON ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION OF AMERICANS OVERSEAS DURING CRISES, INCLUDING THE CYPRUS CRISIS OF 1974. THE ESSENCE OF GAO CRITICISM IS THAT THE LIKELY OCCURENCE AND TIMING OF THE CYPRUS CRISIS WAS PREDICTABLE AND THAT EMBASSY ATHENS' CONSULAR SECTION COULD THEREFORE HAVE BEEN FULLY STAFFED AND PREPARED IN ANTICIPATION OF
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LAST SUMMER'S EVENTS.

2. WE DO NOT ACCEPT THIS LINE OF REASONING CONCERNING THE PREDICTABILITY OF THE CYPRUS CRISIS. NOR CAN WE ACCEPT GAO'S CONTENTION THAT BETTER ASSISTANCE TO AMERICANS COULD HAVE BEEN PROVIDED HAD THE FULL COMPLEMENT OF

CONSULAR OFFICERS NORMALLY ASSIGNED TO ATHENS BEEN PRESENT. WE ALSO BELIEVE THE GAO REPORT FAILS TO DISTINGUISH CLEARLY BETWEEN STATE DEPARTMENT AND OTHER AGENCY PERSONNEL, THEREBY CREATING THE MISLEADING IMPRESSION THAT DEPARTMENTAL PERSONNEL RESOURCES ASSIGNED TO CONSULAR WORK WAS MINIMAL.

3. THERE FOLLOWS THE TEXT OF THE RELEVANT SECTIONS OF THE GAO REPORT FOR EMBASSY COMMENT: BEGIN TEXT.

(A) THE REPUBLIC OF GREECE HAS A POPULATION OF 8.8 MILLION. ABOUT 35,000 AMERICANS PERMANENTLY RESIDE IN GREECE, AND APPROXIMATELY 2,500 AMERICAN TOURISTS VISIT GREECE ON ANY ONE DAY DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS.

(B) IN GREECE, CONSULAR FUNCTIONS ARE PERFORMED BY THE CONSULAR SECTION OF THE EMBASSY IN ATHENS RATHER THAN BY A SEPARATE CONSULATE. THE U.S. EMBASSY HAD ABOUT 145 AMERICAN EMPLOYEES, INCLUDING 7 IN THE CONSULAR SECTION,

AT THE TIME OF THE CRISIS IN JULY 1974. IN ADDITION, THE UNITED STATES INFORMATION SERVICE HAD 37 AMERICAN EMPLOYEES IN ATHENS, AND 1 IN THESSALONIKI WHERE THERE IS A CONSULATE GENERAL WITH 4 AMERICAN EMPLOYEES. SEVERAL THOUSAND U.S. MILITARY PERSONNEL AND DEPENDENTS WERE ALSO STATIONED IN GREECE.

(C) SOME AMERICANS COMPLAINED OF INADEQUATE ASSISTANCE BY THE CONSULATE DURING THE CRISIS PERIOD WHICH BEGAN ON JULY 20, 1974. ONLY FOUR OF THE EIGHT CONSULAR OFFICERS WERE AVAILABLE FOR DUTY AT THE TIME, ALTHOUGH IT WAS APPARENT THAT THERE WAS A STRONG POSSIBILITY OF TROUBLE. THE CONSUL GENERAL HAD LEFT ATHENS FOR A NEW DUTY POST; THE CONSULAR OFFICER WHO WOULD HAVE BEEN ACTING CONSUL LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GENERAL WAS ON HOME LEAVE; TWO OTHER OFFICERS, ONE OF WHOM LATER SERVED AS ACTING CONSUL GENERAL, WERE AWAY FOR THE WEEKEND. THE EMBASSY COUNSELOR FOR ADMINISTRATION SERVED AS CONSUL GENERAL UNTIL JULY 21, WHEN THE SENIOR CONSULAR OFFICER WAS ABLE TO RETURN TO ATHENS. THIS OFFICER, WHO ACTED AS CONSUL GENERAL UNTIL THE CURRENT CONSUL GENERAL ARRIVED ON JULY 27, 1974, IS NOT A DEPARTMENT OF STATE EMPLOYEE. HE WAS ON LOAN FROM THE SOCIAL

SECURITY ADMINISTRATION.

(D) THE ABSENCE OF THE CONSULAR OFFICERS IS DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND. IN VIEW OF THE CYPRUS COUP OF JULY 15, THERE WAS A STRONG POSSIBILITY OF GREEK AND TURKISH INVOLVEMENT ON THE ISLAND TO PROTECT THEIR INTERESTS AND OF POSSIBLE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES. IN SUCH AN EVENT, AMERICAN CITIZENS WOULD BE IN NEED OF PROTECTION AND ASSISTANCE. IN RECOGNITION OF THE SITUATION PREVAILING BETWEEN JULY 15 AND 20TH, THE BRITISH EMBASSY IN GREECE ADVISED TOURISTS TO LEAVE AND THE AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY REQUESTED EMERGENCY FUNDING FOR TOURISTS THAT MIGHT BE STRANDED.

(E) WHEN THE CRISIS DEVELOPED ON JULY 20, 1974, ABOUT 2,000 TO 3,000 AMERICANS GATHERED AT THE CONSULAR SECTION OF THE EMBASSY, MOST OF THEM SEEKING INFORMATION ON THE CRISIS AND ON HOW LONG THE AIRPORT WOULD BE CLOSED. SOME WERE IN NEED OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE BECAUSE BANKS AND CHECK CASHING FACILITIES WERE CLOSED.

(F) TO HANDLE SO MANY PEOPLE, 12 AMERICAN EMBASSY EMPLOYEES, 38 LOCAL NATIONAL EMPLOYEES, AND 37 AMERICAN VOLUNTEERS WERE ASSIGNED TO HELP THE CONSULATE STAFF. THIS AUGMENTATION OF THE REGULAR CONSULATE STAFF WAS APPARENTLY VERY HELPFUL, BUT SOME AMERICANS WERE DISSATISFIED WITH THE SERVICES AND ASSISTANCE PROVIDED. SUCH COMPLAINTS AS THE ONE THAT ARMED MARINE GUARDS STOPPED PEOPLE FROM ENTERING THE EMBASSY MAY BE ONE OF PERCEPTION RATHER THAN OF ACTUAL CIRCUMSTANCES. THE EMBASSY WAS OPEN, BUT EVERYONE COULD NOT BE ACCOMMODATED, AND PERSONS WITH SERIOUS PROBLEMS WERE ALLOWED TO ENTER. HAD THE REGULAR CONSULAR OFFICERS BEEN AVAILABLE, THE ADDED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ASSISTANCE THEY COULD HAVE PROVIDED MIGHT HAVE PREVENTED THIS MISPERCEPTION.

(G) SOME AMERICANS COMPLAINED THAT THEY WERE WITHOUT FUNDS AND COULD NOT OBTAIN ASSISTANCE FROM THE CONSULATE BUT THIS COULD HAVE RESULTED FROM THE FACT THERE WERE INSUFFICIENT CONSULAR OFFICERS AVAILABLE TO HANDLE ALL URGENT REQUESTS. WE NOTED THAT SIX LOANS TOTALING \$1,005 WERE MADE TO TOURISTS IN NEED OF FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE.

(H) WE QUESTION WHETHER CONSULAR OFFICERS SHOULD HAVE BEEN PERMITTED TO LEAVE THE ATHENS AREA DURING THE POTENTIAL CRISIS PERIOD WHEN MORE EFFECTIVE ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION SHOULD HAVE BEEN AVAILABLE TO AMERICANS. THE AMBASSADOR AGREED THAT THE STAFFING SITUATION DURING THE

CRISIS COULD AND SHOULD HAVE BEEN AVOIDED.

(I) THE NEED FOR ADDITIONAL TRAINING OF CONSULAR PERSONNEL IS ILLUSTRATED BY THE FACT THAT ONE CONSUL WE TALKED WITH IN GREECE WAS UNAWARE OF THE BASIC TREATY GOVERNING THE RIGHTS OF U.S. CITIZENS IN GREECE. THE CONSUL WAS UNDER THE IMPRESSION THAT THE VIENNA CONVENTION AND A CONSULAR TREATY RATIFIED IN 1903 WERE APPLICABLE. GREECE DID NOT SIGN THE VIENNA CONVENTION, AND THE 1903 TREATY ESSENTIALLY DEALS ONLY WITH SEAMEN. AMERICAN RIGHTS IN GREECE ARE GOVERNED BY THE 1954 FRIENDSHIP, COMMERCE AND NAVIGATION TREATY.

(J) THE ASSIGNMENT OF SUFFICIENT PERSONNEL DURING A CRISIS AND TRAINING OF MORE PERSONNEL IN WELFARE AND PROTECTION COULD RESULT IN MORE EFFECTIVE RESPONSES TO REQUESTS BY AMERICANS FOR ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION. IN GREECE, CONSULAR PERSONNEL WERE PERMITTED TO LEAVE THE IMMEDIATE AREA OF ATHENS ALTHOUGH THERE WAS A STRONG POSSIBILITY THAT A CRISIS WOULD OCCUR.

(K) IN GREECE, CYPRUS, AND HONG KONG, BILATERAL TREATIES

GOVERN THE RIGHTS OF ARRESTED AND DETAINED AMERICANS. THE TREATY WITH GREECE PROVIDES FOR REASONABLE AND HUMANE TREATMENT, THE RIGHT TO A SPEEDY TRIAL, AND OTHER SAFE-LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GUARDS FOR AMERICANS ACCUSED OF CRIMES AND TAKEN INTO CUSTODY. THE RIGHT OF ACCESS TO DETAINED PERSONS IS NOT SPECIFICALLY STATED, BUT APPEARS TO BE IMPLIED. CONSULAR PERSONNEL TOLD US THAT THE GREEK POLICE USUALLY NOTIFY THE CONSUL GENERAL OF AN AMERICAN ARREST, AND THE CONSUL GENERAL OR HIS REPRESENTATIVE IMMEDIATELY CONTACTS THE CITIZEN. END TEXT.

4. THE EUR/SE STAFF HAS ADDRESSED THE IMPLIED QUESTIONS RAISED BY THE GAO REPORT CONCERNING THE SIZE OF OUR EMBASSY STAFF RELATIVE TO THE CONSULAR SECTION. THERE FOLLOWS OUR PROPOSED REPLY FOR YOUR COMMENT. BEGIN TEXT.

AT THE TIME OF THE JULY/AUGUST 1974 CRISIS, THE U.S. EMBASSY IN ATHENS HAD A STAFF OF ABOUT 145 AMERICANS, OF WHICH ONLY 45 WERE STATE DEPARTMENT EMPLOYEES. INCLUDED IN THE 45 WERE 16 DEPARTMENTAL EMPLOYEES ASSIGNED TO THE ADMINISTRATIVE SECTION (TO SUPPORT BOTH THE DEPARTMENT'S STAFF AND SOME 100 OTHER AGENCY PERSONNEL ASSIGNED TO THE EMBASSY). OF THE DEPARTMENT'S REMAINING 29 EMPLOYEES, 7 WERE ASSIGNED TO THE CONSULAR SECTION FULL TIME. IN THESSALONIKI, ONE AMERICAN IS ASSIGNED FULL TIME TO

THE CONSULAR SECTION, BUT ALL EMPLOYEES INCLUDING THE
CONSUL GENERAL, DEVOTE SOME TIME TO CONSULAR WORK. IN
ADDITION, THE CONSULAR SECTIONS OF BOTH THE EMBASSY AND
CONSULATE GENERAL HAVE A GREEK STAFF OF 38 EMPLOYEES
ASSISTING AMERICAN OFFICERS IN THAT SECTION. END
TEXT.

5. WE HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT, ABOUT TWO YEARS AGO, GAO WAS
SOMEWHAT CRITICAL OF THE LARGE NUMBER OF AMERICAN
CONSULAR OFFICERS IN ATHENS ASSIGNED TO PROTECTION AND
WELFARE. IF EMBASSY ATHENS IS AWARE OF SUCH A REPORT
AND CAN LOCATE IT, IT SHOULD BE TRANSMITTED TO THE
DEPARTMENT ALONG WITH YOUR COMMENTS ON THE PRESENT GAO
DRAFT.

6. WE WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR COMMENTS BEFORE COB AUGUST
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 AUG 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE189997
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: BSCARLIS:DLD
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750277-0495
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750863/aaaacdkn.tel
Line Count: 239
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN EUR
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 5
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: STADIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 08 APR 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <08 APR 2003 by Izenbel0>; APPROVED <09 OCT 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: - GAO DRAFT REPORT ON ASSISTANCE AND PROTECTION OF AMERICANS OVERSEAS DURING CYPRUS CRISIS OF 1974
TAGS: CASC, CPRS, OGEN, APER
To: ATHENS
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006